

A N  
EPISTLE  
To the Church of Christ in  
CHIPPIN-NORTON

As Also certaine *Scripture Rules* which Iesus  
Christ hath given to *His Churches* to walke  
by, which are approved of and consented  
unto, by all the Members of the said

15

CHVRCH.

Published for their use and benefit, and for the satisfaction of  
such persons as desire to know the *Principles*, and  
*practises* of the Church aforesaid.



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By STEPHEN FORD Pastor.

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*As ye have therefore received Christ the Lord, so walke ye in him. Col. 2.6.  
And as many as walke according unto this rule peace be on them, and mercy, and upon  
the Israel of God. Gal. 6. 16.*

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# EPISTLE

To the Church of Christ in

## CHIPPIN-NORTON

As this certain Testimony is given which Jesus  
Christ hath given to His Church to walk  
by which they are preserved and confirmed  
unto by all the Members of the said

## CHURCH

And for this we and hereby and for the foundation of  
this persons as desire to know the mystery and  
power of the Church of Christ.

80:83

By the Church of Christ

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the City of New York.



## An Epistle to the Church of Christ in Chippin-Norton.



Y Dearely beloved friends, my Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus; when the blessed God inclined my heart to the worke of the Ministry, my earnest request to God was, that he would be pleased to cast my lot in a place where I might be (if he saw good) eminently usefull in the Church and service of Christ: and in order thereunto, that he would be pleased to take off my heart from ayming at great things, in the world: that I might never be carryed away with them, so as to neg-

lect the worke of the Lord, in any measure; and that God would give me an enlarged heart and sufficient abilities to performe so great a worke, diligently and faithfully all my days: but it pleased God to hold me in suspence many months after I began to preach; sometimes gathering that God would have me sit down in one place, sometimes in another: but I could not be fully satisfied where the Lord would have me to abide.

Whereupon I determined to stay longer in the University of Oxford, and to wait for a satisfactory answer from God. The same week that I thus resolved, I was desired to preach the next Lords day, at Chippin-Norton, which accordingly I did; and it pleased God, to begin to put a *seale to my Ministry* there as he had done in other places before: and being importuned with much earnestnesse to preach to you once more I was willing so to do: Afterward you earnestly with the rest of the Inhabitants, desired me to accept of the place and be your Minister. At that time I had three places offered me; one of them was worth neer twenty times as much as this poor Vicaridge that now I have; (as many can testify) but I found my heart more inclined towards you then towards any of the said places and through Grace I refused all of them for your sakes; and after I had spent many days in asking counsell of God, I was perswaded, and in some

measure satisfied that the Lord would have me abide with you, at least for a time.

And accordingly I found the Lord sweetly and strongly bearing in my former resolutions and promises to God when I was depending upon him for directing and strengthening Grace upon my heart, and the Lord was pleased to satisfy your desires by his engaging of my heart to continue with you, and I assure you that I am willing to spend, and to be spent for you, and as I never thought any paines too great nor any difficulty too hard that I have not endeavoured to take and break thorow, for the weale and happinesse of your soules: so I trust I shall never knowingly neglect any opportunity, wher in I may any way further your wellbeing here and your eternall Salvation hereafter.

Now my beloved, the returns that I doe expect and desire of you for all the sufferings that I have and am still like to undergoe for your sake, for all my temporall losses, for my care and paines, labour and travel for your everlasting happinesse are, that you will be pleased to read, consider, and practice these following duties.

I intreat you all for Jesus Christ his sake, for the love you beare to his name, his honour, for the love you have to your own soules: if you love peace of Conscience, and desire communion with the ever blessed God: if you would have the sweet smiles of your heavenly Father breaking forth upon you: for the love you professe to have to the glorious Gospell and Appointments of Christ: for the respect you have to the Lords people, who love you and pray for you, who prayed for you before you could pray for your selves, who have seen your conversion, rejoiced with you, for the Grace of God in you: as Barnabas for the Saints at Antioch (11. Act.) for the love you beare to me: if you desire to lay up to your selves a good foundation against the time to come; to have continuall assurance of the Love of God towards you, if you would not be stumbling blocks to sinners: if you value the pretious blood of your Redeemer, if you desire to be prepared for death, and to be partakers of that Crown of Glory which is laid up in Heaven for the heires of Heaven, such as by patient continuance in well doing seek for it. Rom. 2. 7.

(I do beseech you in the first place,

1. Try and examine your selves whether God hath thoroughly and satisfyingly convinced you of your miserable and lost estate and condition by nature, Joh. 16. 8. which may be known by these particulars:

1. Hath God by his Word and Spirit broken and melted your hearts; hath it been and is it so still a soule emptying and heart breathing conviction? hath the Lord shewn you your own nothingnesse and insufficiency; that you have nothing in you that is able in whole, or in part to deliver you out of your sad estate: that you are poore  
and.



and miserable, and blind, and naked, Rev. 3. 17. without Christs Righteousnesse, Iſa. 55. 1, 2.

2. Have your convictions been selfe loathing, and selfe abhorring convictions Ezek. 36. 31. Job. 42. 5, 6.

3. Have you been convinced of the evill of sinne in generall and of your sinnes in particular, both of *omission* and *commission*, how the great, the gracious, and mercifull God hath been dishonoured by you, he who waited to be gracious unto you so many yeares who invited and intreated you to come in and be reconciled to him by Jesus Christ? 2 Jer. 19. Rom. 7. 13. hath it been the burden of your soules that you should thus requite the Lord, to chooſe rather to serve sinne and Sathan then to serve him? Jerem. 3. 25. 1 Tim. 1. 13.

4. Are you brought to loath, to hate, and abhorre all your sinnes: your *right hand*, and *right eye sinnes*: your former beloved sinnes, that were espoused to you? doe you loath the very garment spotted with the flesh? Psal. 119. 104, 113. Rom. 7. 15.

5. Have you cast off & taken your leave of all your former *evill ways*; your flesh pleasing and profitable sinnes as you accounted them: can you say that your hearts are brought to this, that you had rather *suffer much*, then *sinne a little*: that you had rather die then hugge, entertaine, or commit any known sinne? Ezek. 36. 25. Judg. 10. 16. Hof. 14. 8. 1 Joh. 3. 9.

6. Have you been convinced of the *Justice of God*, how justly God might have damned you for the least sinne that ever you were guilty of? that the great God hath cast many thousands into Hell for farre lesse sinne then you have committed: that it was ten thousand to one that you had not been lost, that God hath been infinitely patient and forbearing towards you? Rom. 2. 4. Gen. 2. 17.

7. Have you been convinced of your unworthinesse, that you deserve for ever to be rejected of God, and never to be received into favour with him Jerem. 32. 10. Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.

8. Have you understood & seriously considered what it will cost you to be Christians indeed? many (as I have often told you) when they are a little startled and awaked by the terrors of the Almighty; make some foolish, desperate resolutions and attempts to change their course of life; and go on so to doe for a while; but when they meet with stormes and tempests they change their minds and go back with the dogge to their vomit 2 Pet. 2. 22. Math. 13. 21. Luk. 14. 28, to 34. have you considered that it will cost you the losse of Father and Mother, wife and Children, yea it may be your own lives also: that you must take up Christs yoake and follow him Luk. 14. 26. 27. and are you resolved notwithstanding to be Christians? can you say that none of these things move you? you care not what you

suffer or undergoe, so that you may winne Christ and be found in him, Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.

9. Hath God followed these convictions? have they been revived againe when they have been dying or sleeping? have they spurr'd you on to Christ and to a more dilligent and earnest enquiry after God and your selves Phil. 1. 6. Phil. 2. 13. Joh. 16. 9.

10. Did sinnelye so heavy upon your Consciences and the sence of Divine wrath, as to make you restlessly and unweariedly to make out after Jesus Christ for rest and peace? Math. 11. 28. 29. and when you went about to quiet your Consciences with your prayers, or the good opinion of the Saints: or your reformation or resting upon any other broken reeds or sparkes of your own kindling. Did the blessed God fetch you off, and continually pursue your Consciences untill he had brought your wills to choofe and accept of Jesus Christ upon his own termes; and that freely without looking back with reluctancy of Spirit &c. finding a kind of loathnesse and unwillingnesse to foregoe your Idols; but you could cherefully and heartily cast them all away? can you remember that the Lord hath brought you so farre, and is still carrying on the worke in your hearts: can you find that your hearts were and still are drawn to go to the free grace and mercy of God in and by Iesus Christ, by his blood and righteousnesse, and in the sight and sence of your own lost, miserable, and woefull estate and condition being sinners, and in the sence of your own vilenesse, sinfullnesse, unworthinesse; & insufficiency say sincerely & heartily; Oh Lord: here is a poor, wretched, sinfull Creature come to thee for to be justified and pardoned: Oh Lord I doe abhorre my selfe and all my own Righteousnesse: I am a poor begger, miserable, blind, naked: Oh Lord I am a condemned person cast and lost and I am like to perish for ever by thy righteous Law: but Oh I heare that there is another Court of Iustice and mercy erected for poor sinners to appeale unto, and I am invited, nay commanded to make my appeale there: Lord I come unto thy free grace and mercy: nay Lord I come to thy Justice in Christs name 1 Joh. 1. 9. I believe that he came into the world to save sinners 1 Tim. 1. 15. and that he hath satisfied thy Justice; that he obeyed thy Law, that thou art well pleased with him; Lord thou hast made thy Sonne to be sinne for some persons, that they may be made Righteous by him: he bore the sins of many, yea for all that come unto thee by him, with speciall Faith. Oh Lord I desire to be made Righteous by his blood & righteousnesse, to have Redemption through his blood: Oh Lord if it may please thee to Justify me for his sake; Oh thou that justifies the ungodly, own me and be well pleased with me; & use me in thy worke. I shall account it my greatest happinesse. Oh Lord whatever hath separated between me and thee heretofore I doe utterly and

and heartily renounce, abhorre, and forsake; all my beloved sinnes, all my beloved Righteousnesse; that I may have Communion with thee, that I may no more dishonour thee; Oh Lord I have been a willing servant to sinne and the Divell, but unwilling to serve thee; but oh Lord now I am willing to cast of Sathan's service, and to engage in thy service. I preferre thy ways and thy Commandements tenthousand times before my old ways. Oh Lord I have delighted in sinne but now in Holinesse; to please my lusts, but now to please my God. Oh Lord I am willing to have an interest in Jesus Christ upon any termes, send me where thou wilt, do with me as it shall seem good unto thee; only deny me not an interest in thy Son, in thy speciall Love: Oh for Christ, for Christ am I come; give me Christ else I dye; I will hang upon thy invitation, thy *command*, thy *promise*, Joh. 7. 37. 1 John 3. 23. Joh. 6. 37. Oh Lord thou hast invited sinners to come in, and be reconciled unto thee; O Lord thou hast intreated and beseeched sinners; 2 Cor. 5. 20. to accept of the termes of reconciliation. Oh Lord I doe come, I am a sinner; I am one of them that is invited; 'tis true I am a great sinner, oh yet I am but a sinner. Oh I am willing now to be saved in the same way that *Paul* was. Oh Lord why not I? why not I? seeing that sinners are invited, yea whoever will let him come. O Lord thou hast commanded sinners such as see themselves lost, to look upon thy mercy and Grace in Christ and be Saved. If. 45. 22. Oh Lord I come in Obedience to thy command, I am resolved to hang here: Yea Lord thou hast promised *never to cast off such as come unto thee*; Oh Lord I'll hang upon thy faithfullnesse and promise: Oh let me find favour I am resolved to take no denyall; I will not be put off without thee *Lord Jesus*; I am resolved to be like the importunate Widdow Luk. 18. 1, 2, 3, 4: I will keep crying and praying; Oh Lord 'tis for my life; Oh Lord thou hast been a long time waiting to be gracious unto me, now I will wait for thee to answer my petition, thou hast been many yeares wooing of me to gaine my Love, and consent to marry thy Sonne: Oh Lord now I'll woe thee; Oh now I consent freely. Now with all my heart I am ready to contract with him; here is my soule and body and all is ready for him; Oh if I might but hear one comfortable word from thee about it: Oh that I might see but one smile; but one good look, to encourage me to continue my suit, Oh Lord the end of my coming to thee is, that I may be made *holy*, as well as *happy*; to be *saved from sinne*, as well as *from wrath*: Oh Lord if thou shouldest reject me, I shall dishonour thee to all eternity, the thoughts whereof is burthensome to mee: if thou shalt please to accept me, and *adopt* me into *that family*, and *ingraft* me into *Christ*, I shall live to thy honour and glory: Oh Lord when bloody persecuting *Paul* sought for favour, for acceptance, when *Mary Magdalene* and other great sinners, came

ro thee for pardon thou didst accept them. O Lord thou art as full of Mercy and goodnesse as ever, oh for *Christs sake*, for *Love and Mercy sake*. Oh for the *Honour and prayse* of thy great name pardon, love, receive me into thine arms of Love. Hath the Lord dealt thus with you, have you been thus brought to Christ; could you never be quiet, and satisfied untill you had peace spoken to you by *Christ*, in answer to your constant and importunate suits and petitions; oh then be of good comfort Christ is thine; the spirit of God is in thee; thou hast an interest in the *speciall Love of God*, and in the *Covenant of Grace*; thou mayst go on triumphing over *sinne, death, and hell* who shall lay any thing to your charge, Rom. 8. Christ is at the right hand of the Father for you.

Oh but beloved your worke is not yet at an end; you may not think that it is enough that you are in Christ, and Christ in you, that now you may sit still and be idle; no you just now beginne to worke, you never served Christ till he brought you home unto himselfe; Oh then now up and be doing and the Lord will be with you.

My beloved the reason why I have given these few *trials*, and desired you to try your *estates* by them, is, that you may go on in the practice of your duty to God and man, the more freely, quietly and Comfortably: for I am very sensible what advantage the Devill hath upon poor Believers in their Christian walking, when they are always upon every temptation, ready to doubt whether they are in Christ, when they should go about their masters businesse; the Divell would faine perswade them that they are not his *servants*, and that they have no relation to him, his end is to render their lives *uncomfortable and unfruitfull*, but now when poor soules are sure that they have thus been brought to Christ, as before, and reasoning thus: well I can say that I have been thus drawn to Christ. I have chosen him upon his own termes, and he hath said he will cast off none that so come to him; well I will cast my soule upon his word, il'e trust him with my selfe; and all my concernements, il'e care for nothing but how I may live and *honour God*, how I may bring forth *fruite to him*; I am commanded to cast all my care on him 1 Pet. 5. 7. Phil. 4. and to commit my selfe unto him in well doing; well I will goe about my Fathers worke and doe what he hath commanded me.

I beseech you minde this in the whole course of your lives; when you are tempted to neglect your worke and fall back to distrustfull feares, and doubts about your estates; oh then stand up stoutly and be not overtaken with the tempters wiles; and you will find it very advantageous to your soules.

2. If upon due trial and search you can find that you have been *convinced, emptied, and humbled*, and at last brought to Christ as you have heard.

heard ; Oh then be sure there to rest and rely, let the free Grace and Mercy of God in and by Christ, and the blood and Righteousnesse of Christ manifested, and held forth in the Promises ; be the foundation you rest upon : rest there for continuall pardon for acceptance for all supplys of Grace all must come from thence : here God will finde you and you shall find God : this is your greatest duty yea and your greatest privilege : a privilege farre greater then *Adams* : Now to move you and presse you to this great duty.

1. Consider that it is an easier matter then most of the Lords people think it is, to rest and live upon *some broken Cistern* Jer. 2. 13. after that they are in Christ, and are Justified : As first upon Prayer ; when they have prayed with more affection then ordinarily they doe : or secondly upon brokennesse and enlargement of heart, or thirdly on former experiences : they are of singular use , but not to be rested upon : not to be set up in the roome of Christ : fourthly on grace in them ; on knowledge, faith, or love, or patience, fifthly or on obedience, your care to please God, your respect unto his Commands ; beloved you are to blisse God that he hath wrought these things in you, and labour to be eminent in them, but if you rest and relie upon those or the like & expect acceptance because of these things & to have your wants supplied because it is so with you ; or that God is therefore engaged to you to do you good, herein you greatly erre now that you may see that it is an easy thing thus to doe ; take notice 2. Chron. 14. 11. compared 2 Chr. 16. 1. to the end Gen. 20. 2. Math. 26.

2. Be sure that your old selfish principle will draw you in servility to rest upon something of your own, though not altogether as you did before Christ and you were one, yet in part it will be so.

3. You will exceedingly wrong your own soules if you doe not rest on God and relie wholly on him in Christ, as you have heard.

4. How unworthy will it be of your profession to Iesus Christ, for when you were burdened with your sinnes you sought for ease and reliefe to other helpes and Savioures, but they could give you none, and being perswaded to goe to Christ alone, and to cast all your burdens on him Math. 21. 28, 29. when you promised him that if he would receive you, and take of the guilt of sin from you : you would for ever rest on him ; & wholly cast your selves upon him now you have obtained your hearts desire of him ; be sure it is expected that you should make good your promise, & live out your profession, which you made to him in time of trouble : Christ will take it very ill at your hands if now you should neglect him ; and trust to those things that could not helpe you in time of need Judg. 10. 12, 13, 14.

5. You will cause the Lord Iesus to leave you to your selves ; yea in time of need when you shall go to him for helpe ; he will bid you go unto

your *Gods*: *Judg.* 10. 14. he will withdraw from you and suspend his strenthning Grace, his teaching and comforting presence, if you doe rest upon and trust in any other.

6. Consider that Christ alone can supply all your wants: yea he will if you do cast your selves, and all your concernments upon him 2 *Cor.* 9. 8 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *Jud.* 24. *Phil.* 4. 19.

7. God hath pronounced such as doe not relie on him, but upon any other thing accursed, oh 'tis very dangerous *Jerem.* 17. 5.

8. Many promises are made to this duty: God hath engaged himself by promise to you that shall rest alone on him, to pardon you, to helpe you, to protect you: to give you peace *Mark.* 16. 16. *Isa.* 41. 10. *Rom.* 5. 1.

9. It is of all other duties the greatest, and such a duty that if it be well performed will as a meanes enable you to performe all other duties that you owe to God or men: you will hereby be inabled to pray, to fight against flesh and blood, yea against the Devill himselfe. You will engage the great God to stand by you, to supply you with all grace at all times *Eph.* 6. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Math.* 21. 22.

### *Notes of living by faith.*

1. **Y**ou live by faith and rest on Christ; when you can *acquiesce, satisfie,* and *quiet your hearts* in him when all creatures and creature supports and comforts faile you: then you can trust in him and say I have interest in an able and faithfull God, in a full and allsufficient Christ, and here I can rest my soule, and I am fully satisfied, I have enough in having him, here lye my happinesse, he hath made a Covenant that is sure, and certaine, and this is all my salvation 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. but if you despond in your spirits, complaine, murmure, and are as persons undone when the Lord takes away *Creature supports*: then certainly you rested upon *these things*. A man may think that he doth believe and relie on God with a strong faith so long as he is hedged about with *Creature comforts*, but very difficult to know whether he can *live by faith* indeed at such a time. 1 *Jam.* 30. 6 *Prov.* 18. 10.

2. If it be more and more familiar and easy to you, you can quickly and readily go to your resting place: and not account it a strange thing. *Psal.* 56. 3. *Isa.* 26. 4.

3. If you are not discouraged in the work God sets you about because of the *difficulties* you meet withall in it; but you are carried on with much *resolvednesse*, and *boldnesse of spirit* to doe your duty: yea though your way be hedged up with thornes, yet you will not decline any one duty: it is a signe that you rest on Christ. *Gen.* 22. 10 first verses 20. *Ab.* 24.

4. If you can keep your ground, and stand stedfast, and keep close to God.



God in times of temptations, and raising up of that unbelief that is in your hearts; if you can say that none of these things move you: 6. Eph. 11. to 18. 7. Math. 26.

5. If when the Lord withdraws and hides his face from you, when your graces are dead, your Sanctification clouded; your light is gone out as to your present sense, I say if then you can rest on the name of the Lord: 50. Isa. 10. 43. Psal. 5. and stay upon the God of Jacob: then to conclude, well, though it be a sad and cloudy day now, yet I shall see the Sun-shine of grace againe.

6. If when you see your emptinesse, wants, and insufficiency, you can then go freely unto him who hath all fullnesse of all grace for supply, and there wait untill it please him to satisfy your desires: and you are kept from going back to broken Cisternes; then you live by Faith, 30. Isa. 18. 2 Chron. 20. 12.

7. If you can quietly and cheerfully commit your selves to God, all your cares, troubles, and injoyments; and mind nothing but your duty and priviledges, how you may receive from God, and how you may live to him, and please him well in all things, how you may walk worthy of the Lord, and bring forth fruit to his praise: and take no care but a dutifull care, what you shall eat, and what you shall drink; but throw your selves on God for these things, then you Live by Faith. 4. Phil. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7. 2 Tym. 1. 12.

**N**OW then for your comfort and encouragement know, that if you can find that you are thus brought home to Christ, that there is a real, hearty contract made between Christ and your soule, and that now it is your care to rest and rely on him: then know for your comfort,

1. That you have an interest in, and a right unto all the promises that are made in Christ unto Believers: the Father, Sonne, and Holy Spirit, are all by Covenant engaged to you to doe you good: his wisdom, his strength, his goodnesse, and faithfullnesse, nay his Justice, 1 Joh. 1. 9. oh you that are the Lords blessed ones, rejoyce and be exceeding glad; you may; 'tis your priviledge, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Joh. 18. 21, 23. 1 Joh. 1. 9.

2. You have freedom, and liberty to treat with God about the great concernments of your soules or bodies, yea you may draw neer unto him with boldnesse, and confidence and make your requests known unto him: Oh precious priviledge: Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. Rom. 8. 15. Heb. 4. 15, 16.

3. You have an interest in Christs love: he can and will receive you, and your Sacrifices that you shall offer up to God in his name; he will plead your case in Heaven, be sure he will never neglect you, if you doe not neglect him: he expressed his hearty love to his poor friends when he was



Leaving of the world promising them that if they should aske any thing in his name he would do it, he that loves you can doe what he will for you Joh. 14. 13, 14, 15. Joh. 15. 7. John 16. 23, 24, 26. Joh. 17.

4. *God the Father* himselfe loveth you : *Jesus Christs Father*, and your Father loves you ; notwithstanding your former sinnes, and present infirmities ; he loves you with an everlasting love, before you loved him , he had his heart fixed on you, looking upon you in Christ when you were sinners: though he loved you not with the love of delight and complacency, as now he doth, having stamp't his own *Image* upon you Joh. 16. 26, 27. Joh. 14. 23.

5. Be sure that your Heavenly Father will never leave you nor forsake you ; provided that you endeavour to please him and continue faithfull unto him he will not doe as men, to love for a month or a yeare, and provide for their friends for a few days ; but as his love will be eternall, so will his care be also ; he will provide for your soules and bodys Rom. 8. 32. he delights in the *Prosperity of his Servants* Heb. 13. 5. 2 Chr. 15. 2.

6. You have an interest in, and a peculiar right unto *all the good things* that Christ hath : he hath purchased all things that pertaine to life and Godlinesse ; you being Christs all these benefits are yours ; name what you will that may make for your well being here, and your eternall Salvation and happinesse hereafter : Oh blessed portion. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. Eph. 1. 14, Rom. 8. 32.

**N**OW Beloved the Lord having done all these things for you, having by his Grace brought you so farre in the way to Heaven and given you such great and singular *priviledges* , and many more then I have named ; in the next place I intreat you to consider what manner of persons ought you to be in all manner of holy Conversation & Godlinesse: Oh study now to walke worthy of the Lord, in all well pleasing, being fruitfull in every good worke : Oh consider what the Lord hath deserved at your hands ; what he hath redeemed, chosen, and called you for ; why he hath called you into the *fellowship of his Son Jesus ! Christ*, and with each other, and bestowed such great mercy upon you and labour to answer Gods ends. Eph. 4. 1. Col. 1. 10 1. Thess. 2. 12.

1. Give up your selves wholly to God, devote your soules and bodys and all your *enjoyment, strength, wisdom*, all the gifts that you have received of God unto him, doe it freely and heartily, say Oh Lord all that I am, or have is all thine ; here Lord I freely give it to thee againe 1 Sam. 1. 11. 28. 1 Pet. 4. 19.

2. Love your Heavenly Father and Saviour, as much as you can, oh you heires of Heaven, the more you love him the fuller your hearts will be of Love

Love to him, the more cheerefully you will serve him and obey him, the more you will fear to offend him or to grieve him: Love will keep you from running out after the Creature: oh tis a heart preserving grace.

**N**OW for the increasng and actuating your love to the ever blessed God Psal. 18. 1, 2.

1. Consider and realize much the *great Love, the unspeakable love* of the Lord Jesus to you, it hath and it will for ever even astonish and confound men and Angels, 1 Joh. 3. 1. Rom. 5. 8, 9, 10.

2. Consider and realize the *freewill* of it: he loved thee because it pleased him, no other reason can be given for it but because he would: he saw nothing in you worthy of his Love: he might have hated you, and loved others Rom. 9. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 Deut. 7. 6, 7, 8, 9.

3. Consider how this Love hath been expressed: God hath not expressed it by giving you *corruptible things*, by giving you *earthly inheritances*: not in giving you a reprobates portion: no nor yet in making you perfectly holy without spot: but in parting with his *own deare Son*: in giving the dearest beloved of his Soule unto a cursed death for you to redeem you from the curse of the Law, from sinne, and Satan: to make you *righteousnesse* with the *righteousnesse* of God. 2 Cor. 5. ult. Rom. 5. 8. 1 Joh. 4. 10.

4. Believe and pray much for hearts full of Love, go to him and say; Oh Lord thou that hast all fullnesse of love, I pray thee supply me, Oh Lord I am empty, Oh fill me: Oh Lord thou hast commanded me to love thee; Oh I desire to obey thee: Oh thou hast promised to give it. Deut. 30. 6. Rom. 5. 5.

5. Consider that God is infinite in Glory and in *Holinesse*. All the *excellency beauty and holinesse* that is upon all the Creatures is but a reflection of his *Holinesse, and Glory*, Oh how should poor wretches love him. Exod. 15. 11.

6. Consider he hath loved you with an unchangeable love, your sins Could never hinder it: nor shall never be able to breake it; he will continue to Love you though you oftentimes abate in your love to him. 11. 55.

3. Jer. 31. 3.

2. Take heed of *Hypocrisy* in all your undertakings and walkings, your words and deportments towards God and men: be sure to serve the great God in sincerity, and in truth, and whatever you profess, promise, or do to; or for men; do it without guile. Coll. 3. 23. 1 Pet. 2. 1. Jam. 3. 17.

1. Consider if you do any thing though never so Good an action never so worthy of praise from men *hypocritically*, the blessed God will loose his glory, 'tis not a Believers doing of a good worke that glorifies God unless his whole heart be *sincerely ingaged* unto God in the performance. And

fore the Apostle injoyns servants and all others to do what they doe *heartily as to the Lord* Col. 3. 23. 1 Chron. 28. 9. 2 Chron. 25. 1, 2.

2. Be sure that you will loose the Comfort. God hath appointed his servants their employments, and in their faithfull and dilligent performing their duty to him, he hath promised to give them *Comfort, Joy, and Peace*, but now when men leave out the *speciall qualification* to which God hath promised acceptance and his presence and other benefits, they shall loose the blessing promised. 1 Cor. 28. 9.

3. You will lose your reward hereafter: you shall never heare at the day of Judgement one word for your comfort of any duty that you have performed, but what hath been done in *sincerity and Truth*, 25. Math 21.

4. Con: if you doe not serve the Lord Christ in *sincerity*, and in *Truth*, you will grieve the heart of one of your greatest friends, the *Holy Ghost*, 4 Eph. 30.

4. Con. You will cause the blessed God to depart from you, God cannot, he will not hold communion with such as are *hypocriticall* in their duties: you may not be hypocrites, yet you may have much *hypocrisie* mixed with your duties, and so much if you be not watchfull, and very carefull, as may cause the Lord to *withdraw from you*.

3. **I** Beseech you endeavour to avoid all occasions of evill, what ever may endanger and ensnare your hearts; and cause them to forget the Lord, and to depart from him: as

1. The company of sinners; a man can hardly touch pitch, and not be defiled therewith: he must be a strong Christian indeed, that can associate himselfe much with sinners, and not be insnared and seduced by them: *Psal. 6.8 Psal. 26. 4.*

2. Be sure that you give no way to temptations, but resist them: yeeld not to the tempter a moment: if you doe you will be soyld: *David and Sampson*, and *Jehosaphat* you know were overcome by temptations, because they dallied with them, and did not resist them.

3. Take heed that you be not too bold in using your *Christian Liberty*: it is easy to run too farre that way; th people of God are not so often prejudiced by *unlawfull things*, as by *lawfull*: your hearts will be soon taken with these poor vain delights, that perish with the using. *Gal 5. 13. 1 Cor. 6. 12.*

4. Then you must be very carefull to turne away your eyes from beholding such objects as may probably provoke and stirre up your Lusts, those things that your hearts are soonest affected withall: that are most apt to draw your minds and affections after them: as the *fashions and garbes* of this present age; you will quickly loose your minds; oh I like  
such

such cloathes and such fashions. *Psal.* 119. 37. *Job.* 31. 1.

5. Avoid occasions of evill in this; walke not so much by *example* as by *precept*: look not too much upon the practises of Rich, Wise, and Learned men, it is not safe to follow *examples*, especially of such men, except they be transcendently gracious men: follow men so farre as their *practises* agree with the *precepts* of God. *Phil.* 3. 17. 1 *Cor.* 11. 1.

4. **I**F you desire to live as Christians, and to walke worthy of the Lord, then beware of *Idlenesse*, be alwaies imployed in some honest businesse; for *Idlenesse* is a very great sinne, and it will bring you into many inconveniencies. *Prou* 31. 27. *Ezek* 16. 49. 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. 1 *Tim* 5. 10.

1. You will thereby tempt Satan to tempt you, the Divell will be often visiting of an *idle person*, and tempting him to many finnes, as he did *David*. 2 *Sam.* 11.

2. *Idlenesse* will indispose your soules and bodies for *spirituall* duties, it will bind up your hands and hearts: if you give up your selves to *idleness*, you will not be able to *pray*, or *heare*, or *meditate*, or *examine your hearts*: you will be putting off duties from time to time; resolve to day to be better and to morrow: when to morrow comes, then you will be as unfit as before, and then you will put off God, and quiet your consciences with new resolutions, and so never bring any thing to passe that you desire to doe, and God requires of you.

3. You will thereby incurre *deadnesse*, *dulnesse*, and *regardlesnesse* upon your hearts, which will prove a heavy affliction to you: you will be incapable of enjoying God in his Ordinances, or to worship God *spiritually*.

4. *Idlenesse* will bring continuall guilt upon you, to trouble and disturb your consciences, you will never be at quiet, but alwaies perplexed and tormented.

5. *Idleness* will expose you to many finnes, God will permit many stumbling blocks to lye in your way; God oftentimes punisheth one sinne with another: you will meet with many occasions to draw you to the commitment of other finnes, as *David* found by sad experience.

6. *Idleness* will imbolden your Lusts to break out, it will give vent to Lusts, Idle persons have one Lust or other continually breaking out in words or actions.

5. **I**F you will walk worthy of the Lord, be carefull not to give way unto the *indispositions* of your hearts, take heed of an *indifferent frame* of hearts, when you find an *indifferency* and *loathnesse* upon your hearts to pray, or meditate, or to examine your hearts or practises, or to any other duty.

when you begin to have a very low esteeme of any duty; oh friends suffer it not: to be in you with quietnesse: but

1. Goe to God immediatly in Christ's name; and acquaint him with your condition; say oh Lord it is so and so with me, I have low and undervaluing thoughts of thy Commandements, and my duty to thee: Oh Lord I intreat thee for Jesus Christ his sake, deliver my poor soule, that I may serve thee with gladnesse. *Psal. 55. 22. Psal. 119. 32. Psal. 4. 1.*

2. Consider how deare it cost you heretofore, when you were through your carelesnesse, and neglectfulnesse under such a frame of heart: what expence of labour, paines, and care you were at in praying, weeping, waiting, hearing, and the like, before you were delivered.

3. If it be objected to you, that you cannot Pray or use any meanes to remove it from you at such a time; consider that you ought to doe what you can, though you cannot doe what you would, as you would: If you can but creep to God, and only acquaint him with your present burthens: it is not your unfitnesse, if you doe what you can in Christ's name, that can altogether hinder your prayers from being accepted, *Rom. 8. 26, 27. Psal. 103. 13, 14.*

4. Be sure that it will be worse with you before it will be better, if you yeeld to them. The quieter you are, and the lesse you doe to remove such frames of heart, the more these indispositions will grow, and increase in you: if you cannot use means now to remove them, you will be lesse able hereafter.

5. Consider that so long as you are under such a frame of heart, you cannot be fit for any spirituall duty, you cannot do any good work well.

6. Use such quickenings *considerations*, and *Arguments*, as may probably be a speciall meanes to help you out: to free you from these indispositions.

1. As first, that the blessed God can remove them with a word if he please; and that he is willing and able. *Rom. 4. 20, 21.*

2. That Jesus Christ came into the world to give life, and to give it more abundantly; he came to give quickening grace to believers through the whole course of their lives, as at the first to deliver them out of a state of death, and to bring them into a state of life. *Ioh. 10. 10. Jer. 13. 3.*

3. That God hath promised to quicken dead soules; to remove all your cloggs and fetters, that hinder you from a comfortable walking with him. *Psal. 119. 25. Rom. 8. 11.*

4. That the Lord hath delivered you when you sought unto him; nay when you were wholly dead in sinnes, yea before ever you desired him to doe it for you: and surely he will not now refuse to heare and help you when you call upon him. *Psal. 119. 50; 93. 2 Eph. 5.*

5. That it is the Office and work of the Holy Ghost, to quicken Believers hearts: that he is imployed by the Father, and the Sonne, in such heart quickning work: *Iob. 6. 63.*

6. That it is the will of your heavenly Father that you should serve him with lively chearfull hearts, that he cannot endure to have his children lye under a dead indifferent frame of heart. *2 Cor. 9. 7.*

7. Consider that God is still your Father, and Jesus Christ is still interceding in heaven for you, even then, when you are so bound up in your hearts, as that you cannot bring up your affections to follow your judgements: you have still an interest in your Fathers love, and in the covenant of Grace, and in Christs prayers, *Rom. 8. 34. Iob. 14. 14. Heb. 1. 25.*

6. IF you desire to walk with God: then labour much to be watchfull Christians, keep a strict eye upon your hearts; no Christian like unto a watchfull Christian: none so holy, so humble, so strong, so wise, and faithfull: watchfullnesse is a preserving duty, and therefore the Holy Ghost is often pressing it upon the Lords people: *Math. 24. 42. Math. 26. 41. Mark. 13. 33. to the end. 1 Cor. 16. 13. Col. 4. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 6. 1 Pet. 4. 7.*

1. Labour to spie out the very first turning away of your hearts from God, and then you may prevent your hearts from going any farther; when you are upon your watch, you will find quickly which way your hearts are enclining, and where they intend, and for what: if you do so constantly and faithfullly, you will be able to keep your ground, and still be Lords over your own hearts under God.

2. Watch that you may see and quickly find out what secret flatteries, and flesh pleasing insinuations the Divell at any time shall suggest unto you; Satan will draw you off from God if possible, not by violent temptations, but by some sweet suggestions; pretending that you may do such and such things: for they are lawfull, and others have done such things. that have been holy wise men: others have spent much time in feasting, and merry meetings: in jestings, and merry discourses: in sleeping and idlenesse: and why not you also: why these things are not altogether unlawfull, and many other such wayes he hath to seduce you.

3. Be sure to keep a strict watch when you are in vaine, evill company: for then you will be in great danger of being betrayed; your hearts will soon be drawn to close with them; at least to a conniving at them, or to speak something that may manifest too much of your consenting to them: and make them the more bold in their practises, and betray your own hearts, *Psal. 39. 1, 2.*

4. Observe your hearts when providence calls you to change, either your  
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places or businesses, or both: for then you will be in great danger of losing your hearts, and your God too: many gracious hearts have found it true by sad experience; that have kept close to God for the most part, after they have been converted, so long as they have lived in the same places, and followed the same employments; but in and after some considerable changes, they have miserably fallen, and departed from God. 2 Sam. 11.

5. When you meet with any great disappointments, and crosse providences; or God at any time gives you your hearts desires; then be sure to have a strict eye over your hearts: for if you are not exceeding carefull at such times, you will backslide from God: for then your thoughts will be taken up, about making some carnall advantage by the one: or in looking too much on the second causes in the other: at such times either your hearts will be too high or too low: Job. 1. 1 Sam. 1.

6. Watch when God calls you to the solempne performance of any spirituall duty, either privately or publickly; least when you come to the performance, you come without hearts, or without hearts that will rather hinder you, then help you, 1 Pet. 4. 7.

7. Be sure to watch your hearts, when you are in holy duties; especially when you pray, or speak before others, or when you joine with others in prayer, your hearts will be like the fooles eyes in every corner of the earth at such a time; or pride, and selfe exalting will arise in your hearts: 1 Cor. 3.

8. When you have performed any spirituall duties, and you have met with God in it: you have been filled with joy, and enlargements of heart; your hearts are warme, and chearfull; you can read your names written in the Book of life: oh then especially watch, then you have more need then at any other times.

1. Because your hearts will rest upon your enjoyments; and set them up in the room of Christ; I doe assure you that I have found my heart readier to rest upon these broken reeds, and to neglect Christ, then at any other time; now you should endeavour to see it. Jer. 2. 13.

2. Because your hearts will attribute that which only is due to God, to the Creature; and say my own hands have done this; or by the excellent gifts, and graces of such a man, who prayed and Preached admirably, and so forget that the holy spirit did all for you, and in you; Isa. 26. 12. Phil. 2. 13.

3. Because the heart is very apt to grow secure and carelesse then, more then at another time: then Satan and your own hearts will tell you, that now all is well, and therefore eat, drink, and be merry, untill you have



so provoked the spirit, as that he will take his leave of your hearts secretly, you shall not know when nor how he departs. 1 Kings 9. 2. compared 11 chap. 1. 4.

4. Because if you should depart from God after such *sweet expressions of his love*, you will more dishonour and grieve him then before, and God will take it as a very proud affront to his Majesty, that when he hath sweetly and graciously answered your desires, you should so much slight and undervalue him, as not to endeavour to keep what he hath given you: 1 King. 11 9. Psal. 85. 8.

5. Because when you were waiting and depending on God, for such or the like favours, as you have received, you promised and vowed that you would improve them when the Lord should grant them, now you cannot possibly make good your promises and vows, except you be very watchful, Psal. 76. 11. Eccl. 5. 4, 5.

6. Because then you have power: your *faculties and graces* are prepared; you have divine strength put into your hand, to walk with God, and to doe some singular thing for God, for the farther advantage of your soules, more then at another time. Psal. 36. 9. Psal. 30. 5. Therefore be much in this blessed duty, especially at *such times*: and know that 'tis not your duty only at *such times* (though especially then) but at all times, in all places, in all businesses, in all companies, in all your conversings with men: and in all your conversings with God.

1. **N**OW to quicken you to *this great duty*, consider these few things: first, if you shall carefully, faithfully, and constantly practise *this duty*, you will be able to see, and clearly to discern all passages between God, and your soules: you will see his *comings in*, and *goings out*; you will know the *method of the spirits workings*; you will be ready to imbrace and receive all his benefits: you will quickly see a clear difference between your own spirits, and the spirit of God; your own wisdom, and strength, and his; you will see the worth of divine assistances: 2 Pet. 4. 9. the 45, 5, 6. Chapters of the Cant.

2. You will be well provided to wage warre with the Divell, your Lusts, and the World; you will be able to see your enemies *a farre off*; you will not be surprised, but be able to fight with them *at a distance*, and then you will have a very great advantage, when you shall be able to fight with your enemies *at the swords point*; I can say that when I have fought with sin, and Sathan *at a distance*; that I never was conquered, but was still a conqueror, through the Lord Jesus that strengthened mee, 1 Pet. 5. 8. Eph. 6.

3. Consider that God hath pronounced such blessed, God blesses you even in the very performance of it; besides what soule advantages you will have thereby as you have heard, *Revel. 16. 15. Math. 24. 42, 46.*

4. Consider that it is your duty to watch; therefore do it in obedience to Gods command, make Conscience of performing this duty as well, and as much as of any other Mark. 13. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.

5. You will make your passage to Heaven the more comfortable; you will make the way easy and plaine, you will not be so often at a losse as others are that neglect it; you will be able to runne, when others can hardly creep; you will rejoyce when others mourne *Psal. 51.*

6. God will enable you hereby to be ready to every good worke; you will be able to go from one duty to another, from one businesse to another, from one place to another; to performe the dutys of your particular callings, and goe from them to prayer or hearing, or meditation, or discoursing with the Saints; oh my brethren what a priviledge will you have? none can be greater then to have the heart disposed unto every good word; and worke for God *Tit. 3. 1. Luk. 12. 40.*

7. Be much, and often in the great duty of private prayer; take heed of neglecting that spirituall and soule enriching duty, it hath been and still it is, the Common experience of the Lords people, that the neglect of this dutie hath been unspeakably prejudiciall to their soules; and beloved the Devill will Labour more to keep Believers from this dutie, then (I thinke) from any other; for nothing can prejudice the Devills Kingdome, like unto this duty, well performed: now that your hearts may be the more engaged to this duty, I shall intreat you to realize these few considerations and Scriptures. *Math. 6. 6. 9. Math. 26. 41. Mark. 13. 33. Luk. 18. 1. Luk. 21. 36. 1. Thess. 5. 17.*

1. **I**T is Gods way, his Ordinance, & appointment to Communicate and convey his choicest soul saving mercys to his People; so that if ever you expect much of God; be much in private prayer *Math. 7. 6, 7, 8, Psal. 2. 8.*

2. Conf. God hath promised his Spirit to helpe such as shall be faithfull in waiting on God in this duty: so that when you intend to pray; but meet with great oppositions with much deadnesse, and coldnesse of heart, many great temptations; be not in the least discouraged; but go to the Lord and tell him that you intend to pray as he hath commanded you; but you cannot unlessse he will helpe you; tell God that he hath promised his Spirit to helpe you, and that now you stand in need of him; and intreat him to give him to you, and take no denyall *Rom. 8. 26, 27. Gal. 4. 6. Joh. 14. 26.*

3. Consider that the great God hath condescended to promise to heare the very *groans and sighs of your hearts*, when by reason of the prevalency of your corruptions and temptations you cannot speake out your wants, and desires to God. Rom. 8. 26, 27. Psal. 79. 11.

4. Your Heavenly Father invites you to converse with him: *he intreats you not to be strangers to him*: God would have his people to be familiar with him; call on me saith God, I will heare thee; you may goe to God in Christs name, as friends invited to feast with him; and to aske what you will of him; Psal. 50. 15. Math. 11. 28. Joh. 15. 7.

5. Consider that your Heavenly Father Complaines much of his peoples strangenesse to him; and tells them they had forgotten him days without number. Jer. 2. 32. Isa. 43. 22.

6. Consider that God is your *friend, and Father*, he is full of bowells of love compassion and goodnesse; he will be exceeding ready to receive you and here your prayers and grant your desires; so that when you goe to God to petition him for any mercy, remember you goe to the greatest and most real heartedst friend, that you have. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Jer. 3. 19. Psal. 86. 5.

7. Consider that you have a great *faithfull; loving, and potent friend in Heaven*, to transact all your businesses in Heaven, between God and your soules; one who can experimentally sympathize with you; your advocate and Intercessor is man as well as God; you may open your very hearts to him, with as much freedom and holy boldnesse, as you may to any friend you have in the world; remember what he promised you before he went into Heaven, and put him in minde of them, and be sure that he will be as good as his word, 1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. John 14. 13, 14, 15. John 16. 23, 24, 26. John 15. 14.

8. Consider prayer is an appointment of God, whereby God will hold Communion with his people in his Ordinance, God communicates his minde unto his friends, and the blessings of the new Covenant; and Believers having received of God; they give back againe to him; by acknowledging his *free mercy and grace*: in  *blessing and praising of his Name*; and in resting and relying upon him for further expressions of his Love: and by commending his goodnesse, and inhauncing it. Jam. 4. 8. 1, and 2. Chapters of the Acts

9. Consider God hath promised to heare and to Answer the desires, and requests of his people, that are according unto his will; and God is ever mindfull of his Covenant. Jer. 29. 12, 13, 14. Psal. 34. 15.

10. Consider that if you shall be negligent in this duty, you will quickly incurre *guilt on your consciences*, and bring *hardnesse upon your hearts*;

you will grieve the *holy Spirit*; and cause him to withdraw from you, you will bring upon your selves many *fears* and *doubtings*, which will greatly perplex and trouble your soules: you will loose the *exercise* and *use* of all your *Graces*; yea you will have all your spirituall comforts taken from you *Psal.* 30. 5.

2. Be sure to performe *this duty* according to the will of God: Oh my beloved tis not enough to *pray much*, but take heed how you pray; tis not any kind of praying that is a Sacrifice well pleasing to God *Mat.* 6. 9. after *this manner* therefore pray ye saith Christ.

1. Before you begin to pray, *set a part a little time to prepare*, by considering 1. What your wants are, what you stand most in need of; 2. Whether it be your duty at *that time*; it is an easy matter to be mistaken, and to pray when we should doe some other thing; I assure you friends 'tis a great thing, yea a choise mercy indeed, for a Believer to do all duties in their season. 3. Whether God hath promised to give such things as you intend to aske, whether there be any generall or paticular promise to be a foundation for your faith: 4. Consider with whom you have to doe in prayer a God who is *Justice, Goodnesse, Wisdom, Strength, Mercy, Love, Omniscent, Omnipresent*, and a *Spirit*: and then 5. Consider what frame of heart is; or may be most suitable to these *glorious Attributes* of God; 6. Consider your own unworthinesse; how infinitely unworthy you are of such a privilege. 7. To consider your own insufficiency that you can do nothing without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and that he hath promised the Spirit to them that in sincerity aske him. 8. To consider what encouragements you have from God to pray, and other considerations you should use to prepare your hearts.

3. When you go to God, believe for much, and expect much of God, take heed of doubtings and of low and narrow expectations: open your mouths wide, that is your faith, that God may fill your hearts. *Jam.* 1. 5. *Psal.* 8. 10.

4. Be sure that you get your hearts affected with your wants, and with the greatnesse & preciousnesse of those mercys that can supply them, that so your hearts may hunger and thirst earnestly after them *Math.* 5. 6.

5. Go to God the Father in *Christs name*, go in Christs worthinesse, by his blood, and Righteousnesse, loke on him as on one that sits at Gods right hand to make intercession for you, say unto God, Lord though I am  
unworthy

unworthy yet thy Son is worthy, he hath purchased these mercys that I begge of thee, John 14. 13, 14.

6. Pray earnestly, heartily, and Spiritually to God; take heed of carnall, dead, heartlesse Sacrifice, of formall praying; for that will exceedingly prejudice your soules; never leave off untill your hearts have been carried up to God, Ioh. 4. 24. Coll. 3. 23.

1. **C**onsider your Consciences will not let you alone to rest contented, except you doe the matter of a duty; but then they will be for a time quiet in the thing done, but know that no Sacrifice, no Prayer can find acceptance with God but a *heartly fervent prayer* Jam. 5. 16. Rom. 12. 11.

2. God requires the heart in all your duty's; and therefore it is but reason that you should give that to him. Prov. 23. 26.

3. Consider, unlesse you pray heartily, and earnestly, you cannot doe it in Faith; now whatsoever is not of Faith is sinne. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 14. ult.

4. Consider if you doe not pray so, you mock God, you pretend to doe that which you do not, and you know that that is a great sinne. Gal. 6. 7. Jer. 3. 10.

5. Consider if you do not pray so, you rob God of his own, that which is due to him; you keep from him; will a man rob God, saith the Prophet, will he be so wicked as to detain that which he gives unto him: Mal. 3. 8. Mal. 1. 8; 9.

6. Consider that you will loose all your labour and paines: God will never answer carnall, cold, heartlesse prayers here, nor reward you for them hereafter; he will say who hath required these things at your hands Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13; 14. Math. 7.

7. Continue in prayer; be not discouraged and put off with feares that you shall never obaine that which you pray for, because you are not answered presently: but go againe, and wrestle with God as *Jacob* did and resolve to take no denyall Gen. 32. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

8. Then when you have prayed wait for and expect an answer, looke after your prayers; observe what answer the Lord gives to your prayers. Psal. 85. 8. Sam. 1. 1.

9. Commit your selves and your concernment, your prayers and all into the hand of *Jesus Christ*; as well after you have prayed, as when you are praying; and labour to quiet your hearts as the prophet did in the goodness

ness of God, let him doe what he sees good, referre your selves unto him to his wisdom, care, and love. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

8. **I** Beseech you brethren, take heed of the world; engage not your selves in more worldly busineses then you can well mannage and keep your hearts free for God; and to have time enough for Spirituall dutys; for prayer, hearing, Conference, Meditation, and examination 1 Joh. 2. 15. Rom. 8. 6. Phil. 3. 18, 19. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10, 11, 12.

1. Consider that though it may be profitable for the *body*, yet 'twill be very hurtfull, and prejudiciall to your *soules*, now you know the *soule* is much more precious then the *body*, Luk. 12. 32, to the 33 Lnk. 22. 34.

2.. Consider though you may feare and intend no hurt in so doing to your *soules*, yet your hearts may soon be overcharged with the *cares of this life*; for although in the first beginning your hearts may be kept with God, yet by little and little you will find it will grow worldly Math. 6. 24, to the end.

3. Consider that you have no promise to be assisted and kept by God in so doing; because God hath not called you to so many worldly busineses; God never calls any of his people in love and mercy to more imployments then they may well do (if they will be carefull) and yet keep their hearts free for and close to God Coll. 3. 1, 2. Phil. 3. 20.

4. Consider if you doe so, you will cause both Saints and sinners to have hard thoughts of you: you will loose your room in spirituall hearts; and sinners will conclude that you are covetuous earthly creatures; 2 Tim. 4. 10. Phil. 3. 19.

5. Consider if you engage in more worldly busineses then you ought, you will expose your selves to more temptations then you will be able to beare 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10, 11.

6. Consider 'tis better to have *Communion with God* then to have much of the creature; to have a *praying, enlarged heart* then your *purses full of money*, and your *barnes full of corne*; it is farre better to be enriched with heavenly things, then with earthly Psal. 4. 6, 7. Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.

7. Consider that Saints must be singular men, they must be as lights to guide others, wicked men must see that Saints are men of other Spirits, of choice Heavenly minds. Math. 5. 46, 47. Isa. 63. 8. John 17. 16.

9. **E**ndeavour to walke very humbly having low thoughts of your selves; and shewing much *meeknesse*, and *humility* before all men in your words, deportments, and in all things: Coll. 3. 12. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. Prov. 39. 23, Jam. 4. 6. Isa. 57. 15. Isa. 66. 2, 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6.



1. Consider that you were filthy vile wretched Creatures the worst of all excepting Devils . before the Lord Jesus Christ did cleanse and wash you, before his Righteousnesse covered you : Ezek. 16. 14 *first verses*. Iſa. 51. 1. Rom. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, to the 20.

2. Consider that you have deserved nothing but hell and wrath, or whatever may make you miserable.

3. Consider that to be humble is to be like unto Jesus Christ himselfe, he that was and ever shall be Coequall with the Father, made himselfe of no reputation ; how low did he stoop to exalt you. Phill. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. 1 Tim. 3. 16. John 13. 13, 14, 15.

4. Consider that the more humble you are the more grace you shall have ; God delights to fill the Humble with *Wisdom*, and *knowledge* ; he will open secrets unto such : Psal. 25. 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6.

5. Consider that *Humility* is a great and glorious ornament to Religion ; none can more honour the Gospell then an humble Christian, he is a shining blessed Christian ; oh how doth *humility* commend religion unto others, even unto Saints and sinners. Math. 3. 5.

6. Consider that the more humble you are, the more communion you shall have with God ; you will have more assisting Grace then others to keep you from backsliding ; God will quickly take his leave of a proud person : but he loves to dwell with him that is of a poor and of a contrite heart. Iſ. 57. 15. Iſa. 66. 2. Psal. 138. 6.

7. Consider that you live upon free grace, God may take that from you that of his free Grace he hath given to you, if you forget him, and lift up your selves with his mercys Math. 25. 28 1 Pet. 5. 5.

8. Consider the great distance that there is between God and you, how infinitely great and glorious he is ; he is glorious in holinesse ; fearfull in prayes ; and you are poor nothing Creatures ; poor wormes : God may (if he please) crush you in peeces, and give you no account why he doth so : Psal. 5, 6.

9. Consider that you cannot do any thing without him, you can neither heare nor pray, nor discourse without his *wisdom*, and *strength*, and therefore how little cause have you to be proud of your selves 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Rom. 26, 27.

10. Consider that God requires and Commands you to walke humbly, what doth the Lord your God require of you ; the Prophet answers to walke *humbly with your God*, Mich. 6. 8. Col.

3. 12.



10. **L**abour to have, and to keep always a tender Conscience that the appearance of sinne may make some impression on it; Conscience is an active stirring faculty; it will not be quiet if you give it liberty; if you do not offer violence to it: take heed my friends, you may soon get a seared sleepey Conscience; in a great measure; and know for certain, that if you stop the mouth of Conscience, you will also hinder the spiritus workings, who worketh in and by Conscience; and if the Holy Ghost and your Consciences should once cease their operations, you may be suffered to run into sin, and so from sin to sin; for you have as it were, bound up the hands of your keepers: 2 Chron. 34. 27. *Ag.* 24. 16. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Heb. 10. 22.

11. Take heed of taking the glorious and fearfull name of God in vaine, of using it commonly, and frequently, without feare and trembling; you will not use the name of some great men without some reverence and respect; consider what God hath spoken of Himselfe to his Creatures, to beget in them a holy feare and reverence; how ill the Lord hath taken it, that men speak so slightly, and carelesly of him, the Lord will not hold such a person guiltlesse that taketh his name in vaine, that is, that speaketh of God in a common ordinary manner; Oh my friends, if you love the Great and Holy God, shew your Love to him in being tender of his honour; never make mention of the name of God but with a self abhorring, but with a deliberate purpose to exalt and honour him; Oh my beloved, for the Lord Jesus Christ his sake, if ever you hope to see the face of the Holy God; I beseech you when you speak of God, or to him, do it with feare, reverence, and trembling. *Exod.* 20. 7. *Deut.* 5. 11. *Deut.* 28. 58.

12. Treasure up the word into your hearts, when and after you have heard it Preached unto you, one great reason why you do not grow faster in knowledge, in mortification, and holinesse, is because you are (I am afraid) like unto the hearers that James speaks of, *Jam.* 1. 23. 24. if ever you expect good by the word, you must take pains with your hearts before you heare, and when you are hearing; and after that you have heard, to consider what you have heard, to labour to have it turned into Grace, in every faculty of your soules, to heare for afterward: to search and see what advantage you may make of every Sermon you heare. 1 Cor. 15. 2. *Matth.* 13. 18. to 24. *Psal.* 119. 11.

13. Labour to walk joyfully and chearfully; a holy serious mirth, a spiritall rejoycing, is very commendable in a Saint; let your rejoycing be in God, not in your selves; let it appear that Religion is a reall thing; that  
you

you tast, and feele more sweetnesse and joy in the wayes of God that you walk in, then others to doe in their own wayes.

1. Consider that God hath promised it : he hath promised to make his servants joyfull : to comfort and cheare their hearts. Oh you blessed of the Lord, make out to God the Father and Jesus Christ for much of it; *Isa. 35-1, 2, 10. Isa. 56. 7. Isa. 65. 13, 14.*

2. Consider that the Lord commands you to rejoyce : therefore labour to be joyfull and chearfull in obedience unto the command of God, *Phil. 4. 4. Psal. 97. 11.*

3. Consider that Jesus Christ hath prayed for it : when Jesus Christ was about to take his leave of his friends, you know he made a long prayer to his Father, for his Servants and Friends, that he was to leave behind him in a persecuting world, and among other Petitions you have this, *Ioh. 17. 13.* I come to thee Father, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

1. Be sure to call to mind, and to realize what once you were, and what you are now : you were once Children of wrath, and of the Devil, but now you are the *sonnes and daughters of God*, once the *servants of sinne*, but now the *servants of Christ*. *Eph. 2. 1, 2, 4, 5. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5.*

2. Call to mind what great things Jesus Christ hath done for you, and what it hath cost him, to make heirs of eternall glory, *Tit. 2. 14. Rom. 5. 8, 9.*

3. Be often minding of your heavenly Fathers Love, and free grace to you; how he continues still to love you, how his heart, and Christs heart stands affected towards you, that he loves you really and heartily: *Ioh. 3. 16. 1 Ioh. 3. 1.*

4. Remember your future estate, what you shall be, though now you have many heavy burthens on you, yet the time is coming that you shall be freed from all, and shall be partakers of the fulnesse of Christs joy : you shall see him as he is; realize it to your own soules, that so your hearts may be affected greatly therewith: *1 Ioh. 3. 2. Coll. 3. 4. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Revel. 2. 10.*

14. **T**AKE heed, that you give not place to distrustfull unbelieving thoughts, and reasoning in a carnall manner, at any crosse dispensations: you will then quickly fall into the commitment of other sinnes: you will murmur and repine against God: you will hinder your prayers acceptance, you will quickly weaken the hands of grace, if you give way to the raisings up of unbelieve, and entertaine it in your hearts, you will quickly ruine your selves.

1. Therefore to prevent it, consider that it is your duty to believe and not to entertain any distrustfull thoughts of God; and God takes speciall notice of you, whether you be obedient unto him accordingly  
1 Job. 3. 23. Isa. 26. 4. Isa. 50. 10.

2. Consider that distrustfulness will grieve the Holy Ghost, he hath wrought faith in your hearts, and commands you to use it in order to the destroying of unbelief; and therefore now expects that you should believe, and reject all such wicked thoughts, Eph. 4. 30.

3. Consider how exceeding hurtfull it will be to your souls, if it be not kept in subjection; it will hinder your spirituall comforts; and make you goe sorrowfull to your graves, and disinable you for all your work and service for God. Rom. 15. 13.

4. Consider what grounds you have to believe, what helps and encouragements you have; Gods commands, his promises, his Oath, his faithfulness, power, goodness, mercy, and love, engaged for you, you have the Lord Jesus interceding for you in heaven with his merits: Rom. 1. 17. Heb. 6. 17. 18. 1 Thes. 5. 24. Rom. 8. 34.

15. Labour to be of lively, active, publique spirit, let not the Devils disciples be more lively and active for their Lord, then you are for Christ your Lord: do not give Jesus Christ cause to complain of you, that his adversary the Divell hath better servants then he: do not make Christ ashamed of you: tis a shame to Christ to have dead, lifelesse members: when your hearts begin to flagg, and to lose their activity, then go to him for life, who is the fountain of Life, Joh. 10. 10. Psal. 36. 9. Isa. 55. 1.

16. Labour to have alwaies upon your hearts the allseeing eye of God: Consider that God sees all your thoughts, intentions, and all your contrivements, he pondereth all your wayes: yea there is not a thought in your hearts, but he knoweth it altogether: Christians know that God doth very narrowly pry into all your aymes, and ends, more then into others; he loves the feet of his Saints: Oh my friends this will keep you from the entertaining of many idle thoughts, and vaine words: from mispending of precious time: from sinfull selfish aims and ends in what you doe: it will be a meanes to make you walk warily, and circumspectly before God, Saints, and sinners; and prevent backsliding from God: Psal. 139. 4. Prov. 5. 21. Jer. 17. 10.

17. Labour to be much affected with Gods favours to you, but especially with the God of the Favours, and mercies; and endeavour to be very thankfull for them: for soule mercies, and bodily mercies; Labour to see the true and full worth of the mercies, that you enjoy; consider that  
you

you are lesse then the least of them; consider that all your enjoyments; all your mercies for your soules and bodies, are given to you upon a speciall account, they are *new Covenant mercies*; and the Lord Jesus hath purchased them for you: so long as you have a low esteem of mercies, you cannot be affectionately thankfull for them: Oh *redeeming mercy*; *electing mercy*; *calling, converting mercy*; *confirming, and comforting mercy*; Oh how great is *persevering mercy*; *teaching*; and *soule strengthening mercies*, oh your great Gospel mercies; your *Ordinary mercy*; your mercies of *peace, health, and Liberty*, which all of the Lords precious Saints in the world cannot enjoy, *Math. 13. 16, 17.*

18. Keep to the good way of God wherein you have walked, and wherein you have found God sweetly revealing of himselfe unto you; and take heed that you turne not aside to the right hand or to the left: Oh labour to be *stayd, stable, strong Christians*: take heed that you be not *soon shaken in mind*; for tis a good thing that your hearts be established with grace, let no man deceive you with vaine words, and draw you back again from your faith and practice, to the old corrupt formall way of worshipping God againe: Oh let not the flatteries, or frownes, or reproaches of men, though from your nearest relations, in the least measure, cause you to faint in your spirits, or cause you in the least, to decline from the ways of God; *if any man draw back (saith God) my soule shall have no pleasure in him*: think not that you doe not walk in the ways of God because wicked men reproach you for so doing: no my brethren, but rather use it as an argument that you are in the way, because you are reproached by such men; Consider that so long as you walked as the world did, and there was no difference between you and them, they did not trouble you: Gods owning of you and visiting you so often; with such sweet expressions of love, should confirme you in your principles and walking; against all the Arguments of men, *Eph. 4. 14. Heb. 13. 9. 2 Pet. 1. 12. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 12. 3, 4, 5. Ioh. 15. 18, 19.*

19. Let all that you doe, all your purposes and intentions, all your thoughts, and words, or as many as possible, be directed to *exalt the name of God*: When you heare the word preached heare for God: that you may be made more like unto him: that your hearts may be brought nearer unto him: that you may know more of his will, that you may doe more, and so when you pray, or converse with the people of God, or with sinners, pray for to *exalt and honour him*; converse for God, labour in all your callings, and worldly businesses for God: you will loose all your Labour, cost, and paines, that you lay out, and spend in any good

work, if you doe not intend for God; and give it to him: 1 Cor. 10. 31.  
Col. 3. 23. Prov. 3. 6.

So. I beseech you in the last place, give diligent heed to these *Rules*, that you have promised to walk by: Labour to understand, to remember, and to practise every one of them; so farre as they are practically: oh beloved, your priviledges are many and great, as you have oftentimes acknowledged to God: and therefore be sure that your duties are many and great: God having done more for you then for others, oh therefore be more *wise*, more *holy*, more *circumspect*, more *loving*, more *fruitfull*, more *diligent*, and more *faithfull* then others: oh labour to be more *humble*, more *sincere*, and more *abounding in the work of the Lord*. Oh my beloved friends in the Lord Jesus, how infinitely are you engaged to God, you owe your selves and all your enjoyments unto him; he hath kept back nothing from you that might doe you good: he hath freely given his *own Son*, his *holy spirit*; oh rejoyce in God and love, and feare, and honour him, think nothing too much that you can doe to honour him, he was contriving and lying out his thoughts from all eternity about your salvation; contriving how to make you everlastingly honourable and happy: Consider my deare friends, you have but a few days to worke and suffer here, you are drawing towards your rest, oh how blessed will you be if you shall continue stedfast, and unmovable in your walking with God unto the end; Oh my Friends keep close to God, & he will keep with you; he will not depart from you, if you will not depart from him: 2 Cron. 15. 2. your God and Father will delight to do you good: you may have the liberty to aske what you will and it shall be done; if good for you, oh fight strongly against your spirituall enemies: you must fight before you can overcome, before you can be crowned as conquerers even as Jesus Christ himselfe hath done for us, and before us: surely if we will be partakers with Christ in his Crown and Glory, we must first suffer and worke with him. Consider all the goodworkes that you shall performe in *sincerity*, for the *glory of God*, shall all be remembered at the last day, to the infinite and endlesse Joy and comfort of your soules; all your sufferings for Righteousnes sake shall be abundantly rewarded: feare not little flock, it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you a Kingdome, your Lord and Saviour will shortly come and see you: he will fetch you home unto himselfe: when your enemies shall have that dreadfull sentence, *depart from me ye cursed*, he will say to you *come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdome of Glory*; now you that have followed me shall sit upon twelve Thrones judging the twelve tribes of *Israel*. Then your enemies will be confounded

confounded and ashamed, then they shall bow and bend to you. Oh you that now suffer from your relations, you shall then be perfectly delivered, and separated from them: it will not then grieve your hearts to see them rebellious your naturall affections shall then cease; you will be then wholly swallowed up in glorifying the blessed God, then all your teares shall be wiped away; your sorrow shall flee away; you shall be swallowed up of life: Oh how welcome will you be to Saints & Angells: Oh then you will admire free Grace: you will crie *Grace, Grace*, then you shall have your hearts filled with love to God; then all your *prayers, sighs, groans, and teares* shall be answered, then you shall rejoice without ceasing; then you shall be crowned with Glory and Honour and you shall never be reproached any more. Oh you *beloved of Gods soule*; you shall never complaine of a *dead heart*, any more. Never crie out of a *hard heart*, of a *streightned narrow heart* any more: then your hearts shall be enlarged: and you shall forever sing for joy of heart; oh therefore be willing to follow *Christ a little while* & he that shall come to put you into the full possession of your promised happinesse will come, and will not tarrie: unspeakably blessed shall you be if your blessed Saviour should come and find you so doing, which is the prayer of

*Your servant in the*

*Gospell of Christ*

*S. F.*





A short Preface touching the occasion of  
Printing these following Rules.

**W**hen I saw that the blessed God had by the Preaching  
ing of the glorious Gospell turned the hearts of ma-  
ny sinners from sin, unto himselfe; from resting  
on their own Righteousnesse : to an earnest en-  
quiry after an interest in Christs Righteousnesse :  
I was much pressed in Spirit to endeavour to bring the said Con-  
verts into Gospell order : and accordingly shewed that it was their  
duty and Priviledge to enter into a Church state : and as soon as  
they heard that it was their duty, they wayted on God by fasting,  
and prayer for wisdome and strength, to walke in that way that  
God had appointed them to walke in : and after they had spent  
many days in asking helpe of God : the Lord so satisfied their  
hearts as that they declared their desire to walke in that way that  
I had (through grace) made known unto them : and desire to be  
farther instructed in their duties in order thereunto : and also of  
their duties in a Church state, whereupon I wrote these following  
Rules : (which I judge to be according to the revealed will of  
God) and proposed them unto the said persons : who freely gave  
their consent and resolved to endeavour to the utmost of their  
abillitys to walke by the said Rules. Now the Saints in their  
place being many : and all of them besides many of the Lords  
people that live in other places) desired to have the said Rules  
by them : (many of them not being able to read any mans wri-  
ting) which could not be except their said Rules were printed :  
where fore being also exceedingly importuned by the Church, I  
thought good to have them printed : which I hope will be offensive  
to none : and profitable to many.





*Certaine Scripture Rules, which Iesus Christ  
hath given to his Churches to walke by : which  
are approved of, and consented to, by all the  
Members of the Church of Christ  
walking in Gospell-fellowship in  
Chippin-Norton.*



THE matter of a visible Church of Christ,  
are Visible Saints : such as in the Judg-  
ment of rationall Charity according to  
the revealed will of God appeare to be  
Saints Luke 22. 14. *Act.* 1. 15, 16. *Act.*  
2. 37. to the end. *Act.* 4. 32. *Act.* 5. 14.  
*Act.* 9. 26, 27. *Act.* 8. 37. *Act.* 14. 22,  
23. Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1.  
Gal. 1. 4. Eph. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. Coll. 1. 2.  
1 Theff. 1. 1, 4. 2 Theff. 1. 1, 2, 3. To  
these Scriptures may be added the  
Judgements of many Godly and lear-  
ned divines, both Presbyterian and Inde-

pendent, the Assembly in their confession of Faith, M. Hooker of new England ;  
M. Cotton, M. Norton, M. Ainsworth, D. Owen, D. Goodwin, M. Jer. Burroughs,  
M. Nye, M. Bridges, M. Greenhill, M. Wellman, M. William Barile, M. Stuckly,

M. Chubb, M. Palmer, and the Ministers that joyned with him in Answering M. Humphrys Book, for free Admission, M. Robinson, and many more might be added to these.

2. The *formall cause* of a *visible Church of Christ*, are *Saints united in Gospel order*: For a certaine number of true Believers walking at a distance from each other: and scattered up and down in a Towne or Parish, living as strangers to each other, doe not properly, and formally make a *visible Church*: but only such as walke together according to Christs appointment; so then that which gives being to a true *visible Church of Christ*: is, when seaven or more Believers do freely and voluntarily give up themselves to each other, promising in the strength of God, to walke together in the same individuall ordinances of *Christ*, and in the practice of the same dutys according to the *Gospel*. *Deut.* 29. 1, 9. *1 Cor.* 8. 5. *Gal.* 2. 9. *Neh.* 9. 38. *Neh.* 10. 1, 29. *Josb.* 24. 71. 28.

3. For the Fathers knitting of the hearts of all the members together in *mutuall love*, which is the *bond of perfectnesse* among *Saints*: & also that they may performe all dutys the more freely to each other: & for many other reasons it is needfull, that all that at first imbody together, & all that afterwards shall be added, that they be satisfied in each others fitnessse to be *Church members*; upon such grounds as *Paul* & others in the primitive times did conclude, mens *Sainship* from: they did not conclude that men were *Saints*, because they were not *prophane*, but upon such grounds as these; that they did bring forth *fruits of Righteousnesse*; *Phil.* 1. 1. compared with *v.* 11. that they did *trade for Heaven*. *Phil.* 3. 20. from such notes of true conversion, as they had in *Act.* 2. 37. to the end: such as *David* speaks of in *Psal.* 15. 1, 2. and *Paul* *Rom.* 8. 1. who walked after the *Spirit*: and their *Love* unto, and delighting in the *Saints* *Eph.* 1. 15. *Psal.* 15. 4. also such grounds as we read of in *2 Cor.* 7. 10, 11. and such as waited for the coming of *Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor.* 1. 7. which none but *Saints* can really do: by their understanding of *spirituall things* *Spiritually*: as such doe understand whom God loves *1 Cor.* 2. 9, 10, 14. being such as had made a publik profession of their subjection to *Christ* *2 Cor.* 9. 13. and also by their *Sanctification*, and *Holinesse* *1 Cor.* 6. 11. by the *fruits of their Faith* they were known to be *Saints*, as *Paul* calls them upon that ground *1 Col.* 1. 6. *1 Thess.* 1. 3. now upon these and the like grounds, we are to Judge charitably of men, and to conclude that they are *Saints*: though possibly some of them may be *Hypocrites*: and to receive them into fellowship as *brethren*: and to performe all offices of love towards them as *members of Christ*.

4. *Visible Saints* being thus united together by mutuall consent, they

they are now a true visible Church of Christ; according unto Christs institution: such was the Church in Jerusalem *Act.* 1. 4, 14, 15. *Act.* 2. 42. to the end *Act.* 8. 1. *Act.* 13. 1. *Act.* 4. 32.

5. That the said Church hath sufficient power to choose the Officers that Christ hath appointed, and ordained to teach, and Rule the said Church; for Jesus Christ hath appointed and given to his Church Pastors & Teachers, and other Officers for the well being of his Church, & the said Church may call the said Officers to teach and rule her without the Officers or members of other Churches *Act.* 6. 3. *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. 1 *Chron.* 29. 20, 22. *Act.* 15. 22. *Act.* 13. 1, 2. *Act.* 11. 22. 2 *Cor.* 8. 19. *Math.* 16. 18.

6. That the Church should aske Councell of God, by fasting and prayer to direct her in her choise, and to direct and blesse the person or persons to be chosen to teach, and rule, her, as also to have knowledge of his or their holynesse, and abilities for such a worke, before the said Church choose them to teach and rule her *Act.* 14. 23. *Act.* 6. 6. *Act.* 1. 24. *Act.* 13.

7. The Officers that Jesus Christ hath appointed for, and given to his Churches are a Pastor, Teacher, Ruling Elders, Deacons, *Eph.* 4. 11. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Act.* 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. 1 *Tim.* 5. M. Hooker calls widows Officers, *Survey* part. 2. pag. 4. 32. M. Cotton calls them Assistants: *Way of the Churches*, pag. 39.

8. That a Pastor, Teacher or any other of the said Officers; have Authority and power from Christ, and the choise and call of the Church, and ordained according to the Gospel Rule, to officiate in and to exercise the office of a Pastor &c. In and over the said Church, for Christ hath given them their power, and the Church hath called them to exercise it in the said Church, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.

9. That a Pastor &c. so Authorized and chosen by Christ and his Church, hath power only to teach and officiate as Officers in the Church that hath chosen them, although the said Pastors and Teachers may preach in other Churches, and places as gifted men *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.

10. That a Church so constituted according to the mind of Christ, is not subject to any other church upon earth; She hath no Lawgiver but Jesus Christ; no head or Ruler but Jesus Christ, as a Church, *Mar.* 9. 35. *Mat.* 16. 18.

11. That the said Church may desire the assistance of other Churches in difficult cases; which cannot be determined by the Church; and the Church should submit to their determinations if consonant to the minde of Christ *Act.* 15. 1, to the 30.

12. That when any persons are desirous to joyn themselves to the Church; the said persons should first make known their desires to the

*Pastor* or *Elder*, (if the Church hath any) and that the said persons do satisfy the *Pastor* some way or other of their fitnessse to be received into the said Church : *Act*. 8. 30, to 37. *Matth*. 3. 6. *1 Per*. 3. 15.

13. That if the *Pastor* or *Elder* be satisfied in the fitnessse and qualification of the said persons desiring admission ; that then the said *Pastor* or *Elder* is to propose the said persons to the Church at their next meeting.

14. That all the members of the said Church that shall be present when a person is to be received into the Church ; are upon Scripture grounds to be satisfied in the fitnessse and worthinesse of the person then to be admitted ; & also to give their free consent to the persons admission ; and also in the censuring , suspending , and excommunicating of an offending member ; *Act*. 15. 22, 23, 25. *1 Cor*. 5. 4, 5. *Act*. 9. 26, 27. unlesse such as are unsatisfied shall give convincing reasons why he ought not to be admitted ; in a short time the major part of the Church ought to admit the said person

15. That not a bare profession, and forme of Godliness be adjudged a sufficient qualification for a Church member, without the fruits of the power of Godliness *Tit*. 1. 16. *2 Tim*. 3. 5. *Matth*. 3. 7, 8, 9. *Act*. 8. 37.

16. That in case any member of the Church be unsatisfied in the person proposed for admission , that then the said member endeavour privately to be satisfied as soon as possible : but in case satisfaction cannot be obtained, that then the said Member, is to give the grounds and reasons of his non satisfaction to the *Pastor*, or *Elder*, and to no other person excepting him of whom he desires satisfaction : or the Church shall call him so to doe, least it should prove prejudiciall to the said person. *Matth*. 18. 15, 17.

17. That ordinary and common infirmities incident both to weak and strong Saints are not to be sufficient grounds for to suspend any persons admission , or to censure any member that shall be admitted : provided, that the said persons in the generall course of their lives walk as becomes the Gospel. *1 Cor*. 5. 1. 11. *Gal*. 6. 1, 2.

18. That such persons as through modesty , or want of the gift of utterance, cannot by word of mouth declare the dealings of God with them to the satisfaction of the Church, that then the said persons have liberty to give satisfaction to the Church in writing, or otherwise.

19. That every member doe quietly and patiently ; submit to the judgement and determination of the Church, if agreeable to the word of God in any case, that shall be determined by the Church , concerning any particular member thereof, *Heb*. 13. 17. *Act*. 15 *1 Cor*. 5.

20. That if upon due triall of Persons desiring admission, the Church may gather by their words or works, that they have the *saving work* of grace wrought in their hearts (at least probably) though but as a graine of Mustard seed: if they have a competent measure of knowledge, the said persons ought to be admitted, notwithstanding they are but weak in grace, in comparison of other men; *Rom: 14. 1. Rom: 15. 1. Añ: 2. 37 to end. 1 Cor: 3. 2, 3.*

21 That if the Persons that desire admission shall be found unworthy, they should be desired to forbear until they shall be found worthy; *Mat: 3. 7, 8. 9. Añ 9. 26, 27.*

22 That all such persons as are admitted members of the Church, their Children also ought to be accounted and received members of the same Church, and their Membership to be confirmed by Baptisme; *Añ: 2. 38, 39. 1 Cor. 7. 17. Gen. 17. 1 to 15.*

23 That if any Member of the Church shall offend, and persist in the practise of the sinne after reproofe first by one Member; secondly by two or three; that then the said offender is to be brought before the Church, and his sinne laid open to the Pastor, by the persons that have dealt with him more privately, and the Pastor is to acquaint the Church, and the Church is to labour to convince him, and to bring him to the sight of his sinne, and if possible to repentance; and in case he will not heare the Church, and expresse his repentance, that then the said Member is to be suspended, or cast out of the Church; and that all the Members present should give their consent thereunto; *Mat: 18 17. Num. 15. 30, 31. Num. 19. 13, 20. Ezra 10. 8. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 6.* but in case some few Members should refuse to give their consent, to the suspending or excommunicating the said offender, without giving the Church convincing reasons for their refusall; the major part may suspend or cast him out.

24. That in case any person fearing God, shall desire to joyne with the Church, but through weaknesse of judgement, and want of light in these things cannot be fully satisfied in some circumstance used and practised in the Church; and yet the said person be willing to walk in Gospel Fellowship with them in all other things: he ought to be admitted into the Church: provided it may not apparently tend to make a breach in the said Church: *Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Rom. 15. 1 Cor. 8.*

## More Particular *Practicall* Rules

For walking in Church-fellowship.

**T**Hat all endeavour to the utmost of their power and abilities (especially by their practice) to set up and maintain all the ordinances of Christ, that he hath given to his Church, for his own Glory, and his Churches edification and comfort; *Zach.* 14.17, 18. *Jos.* 24.15. *Deut.* 6.7. *Eph.* 6. *Gen.* 18. 19.

1. *Publique and Private prayer*, which are Gods holy appointments for to convey Grace into the hearts of his Saints, *Luke* 21.36. *Acts* 1. 24. *Acts* 4.41. *Mark* 6.6.

2. *Preaching and hearing the word*, publicly or privately, these are Gods Ordinances; *Prov.* 8.34. *Act.* 18.28. *Act.* 20.20 *Isa.* 55.3.

3. *Singing of Psalms and Hymes and Spirituall Songs*, *Matth.* 26.30. *Eph.* 5.19. *Col.* 3.16. *Jam.* 5.13.

4. *Conferences one with another*, is an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, *1 Thes.* 5.11. *Heb.* 10.24,25. *Jude* 20.

5. That Jesus Christ will have *particular Churches* untill his second coming, and therefore 'tis the duty of all Saints in their places and capacities, to help to set up, and uphold this Ordinance and appointment of Jesus Christ, *Rom.* 16.4, 16. *1 Cor.* 7.17. *1 Cor.* 11.16. *Gal.* 1.2. *Rev.* 1.11. *Rev.* 2.7. *Rev.* 22.16.

6. *Baptisme*, and the *Lords Supper*, are Gods Ordinances, and they are appointed to be *signes* and *Seales* of the *Covenant of Grace*, between God the Father, Son, and Believers, *Matth.* 28.19. *1 Cor.* 11.23.

7. The *Ministry* is an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, and to continue in the Church unto the end of the World; and therefore all should endeavour to set up, and to vindicate *Christs Ministers*, and their *Ministry*, as much as they can; *Eph.* 4.11,12,13. *1 Tim.* 5.17. *Heb.* 13.17. as an ordinance of Christ.

2. That all doe endeavour to *grow in grace*, and to be spirituall Saints, such as may worship God in *spirit* and in *Truth*, and walk *spiritually* before Saints and sinners, that they may commend Religion unto others by their spirituality: for God hath promised that such as are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish, and goe from strength to strength in Sion, *Psal.* 92.13. *Psal.* 84.7. you should labour to be spirituall in all places, in all companies, and in all businesses, in your words and deportments, *Ioh.* 4.24. *1 Cor.* 3.1, 2.3. *Gal.* 6.2.



3. It is the duty of all, to labour and endeavour to obtain so much wisdom, and spirituall understanding as is possible, in spirituall things; that so they may be able to serve God, and worship him according unto his will: that they may not be soon shaken in mind, and tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine; but that they may be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement in the truth: *Coll. 1. 9. Eph. 4. 12, 13. Eph. 3. 18. 19.*

4. That all doe labour after a great measure of Faith, that they may be able to trust God in times of triall; and not dispend, and be dejected at every providence that thwarts *sense* and *reason*; but to be able to cast themselves on the free grace, mercy, faithfullnesse, wisdom, power, and Love of God in Christ: and to give him all the glory of his dispensations: the contrary renders Religion odious and unpleasant; *2 Pet. 3. 18. Eph. 6. 9. to 18. Eph. 4. 15.*

5. That all the members of the said Church, do endeavour faithfully, according to their abilities and opportunities, to performe such duties as they owe to each other in their relations; whether as *Saints*, and members of Christs body; or as *Men*; and so as *Parents* or *Children* or *Husbands*, &c. *Rom. 13. 8. or as Officers* that teach or rule, or as *private members*, that are taught and ruled.

1. A Pastor is to attend upon Preaching the word in season, and out of season; and to administer the Sacraments; to answer objections, doubts and scruples; to the study of the word; to maintain and defend the Truths he Preaches: to watch over the flock: to protect them from wrong; as much as he can: all which he is to doe as a Pastor of his own flock only; and he is to manage matters in the Church, that concernes the well ordering of it, *1 Cor. 12. 28. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. Luk. 22. Att. 20. 11. 2 Cor. 1. 4. Mal. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14. 2 Tim. 2. 15. Tit. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 5. 2,*

2. The duty of the Members to their Pastor; first to provide for him: for his subsistence, and comfortable being: that he may not be entangled with the affaires of this life; but that he may wholly give up himselfe to the work of the Lord, *1 Tim. 4. 15.* and discharge the trust committed to him, *Gal. 6, 6, 7, 8. Rom. 15. 27. 1 Cor. 9. 7 to 15.*

2. Not to receive an accusation against him under two or three witnesses, *1 Tim. 5. 1, 19.*

3. To give him that Love and respect that is due to him and no more; to be carefull not to give him that honour that is due only to God; or to refuse to give him that which God commands them freely to give unto him, *1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17.*

4. To attend upon his Ministry, as they have opportunity both in private and publick, *Act. 2. 42.*

5. And in a speciall manner to pray for him, that God may blesse him in his studies: that God may direct him to Preach such truths as may by the blessing of God be most advantageous and profitable to Saints, and sinners: and that God may give him the door of utterance, that he may speak the Word with boldnesse and cleannesse: that he may give to every one his portion: that he may be able to divide the word aright; that he may be led into all truth; that he may be very successfull in the turning of many sinners to God, *1 Thes. 5. 25. Heb. 13. 18. Act. 12. 5. 2 Cor. 1. 11. Phil. 1. 19. Rom. 15. 30. Eph. 6. 18, 19.* The duties of Members to each other, and towards all men.

6. The Members are commanded to Love each other truly and heartily without dissimulation: in deed and in truth, *Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thes. 3. 12. Ioh. 13. 34. Rom. 12. 9.*

7. All the Members should have a watchfull eye over each other, that they may keep each other from sinne; and if fallen into any sinne to hasten their deliverance. *1 Thes. 5. 6. 1 Cor. 12. 25.*

8. Not to speak evill or to backbite one another, *2 Cor. 12. 20. Jam. 4. 15.*

9. They must be carefull not to declare the faults of one another: to each other, before they have lovingly and deliberately informed the Brother or Sister that hath offended, of his or her faults, and endeavoured to convince him: and not then, but in case of obstinacy; *Math. 18. 17. 2 Cor. 12. 20.*

10. They must not beare any grudge or envy in their hearts against any Member, whether upon any evill reports of them, or upon any wrong received from them, *1 Pet. 2. 1. Levit. 19. 18. Jam. 5. 9.*

11. They must honour each other, as God hath commanded them, and that in sincerity and in truth, *Rom. 12. 10.*

12. That they provoke and exhort one another, to the diligent practise of their duty toward God and all men, *Heb. 10. 24, 25. Heb. 3. 13.*

13. That they informe, reprove, and admonish one another when there is occasion, *Rom. 15. 14. Col. 3. 16. Eph. 5. 11.*

14. To supply the wants of one another: if any Member shall stand in need of subsistence: according unto every Members abilities, they ought to communicate unto him, *Rom. 12. 13. 1 Tym. 6. 18. 1 Pet. 4. 10.*

15. That none suffer sin to lye on his Brother, and connive and wink at it: but immediately if possible to discover it unto him, *Levit. 19. 17. Math. 18. 15, 16. Gal. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

16. That every Member is commanded by God to *Pray for each other*; and that *frequently, heartily, and fervently*, especially for such as lye under any affliction, or temptation either in *Soule or Body*, *Jam. 5. 16. Ad. 12. 5.*

17. They ought to *comfort each other*, with the comforts wherewith they have been comforted of God; to comfort each other with their Fathers promises to them; with the mediation of Jesus Christ, the great honour that God hath put upon his people; and the hopes of their future happinesse &c. *1 Thes. 4. 18. 2 Thes. 5. 14.*

18. It is their duty to *teach*, and to *Instruct one another*; the eye may help the *hand*, and the *hand the eye*; the foot may and ought to be helpfull to the *head*, *1 Cor. 12. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 11. 2 Col. 16.*

19. To *rejoyce* with such as do *rejoyce*; and *weep* with such as *weep*; to have a fellow feeling of each others *mercies* and *troubles*; to have a sympathizing *heart, hand, and eye*, towards each other, as fellow members of the same body, *Rom. 12. 15.*

20. That all such Members as have *Families*, ought to set up the *worship of God* in them, and not only the *forme of Divine worship*, but the *power*, and *spirituallity* of it: to instruct those that are under their charge, *Gen. 18. 19. Deut. 6. 7. Iohn 24. 15. Jer. 10. 25. Eph. 5. 4. Iob. 4. 23, 24.*

21. That they ought constantly to attend on all the *Ordinances of God*, at all times; except some extraordinary occasions hinder, both publickly and privately, *Prov. 8. 34. Mal. 3. 16. Heb. 10. 24, 25. Rom. 14. 19.*

22. That all ought to endeavour to walk *inoffensively*, giving no *offence* to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God; labouring to walke *wisely* towards them that are without, as that you may through the grace of God, thereby possesse them with good thoughts of *Jesus Christ*, of his *wayes* and *People*: and also that every member endeavour to preserve the *Peace* and *priviledges* of the Church; and of every member thereof, *Eph. 4. 1 to 6. 1 Iob. 3. 11 to end. Col. 3. 12, 15. Phil. 2. 1-6. Gal. 6. 1.*

23. That all ought quietly, and patiently, to submit to the *Power* that

that God hath by his providence *set over* them, and obey all their *lawfull commands willingly*: the contrary is hatefull in the sight of God, what ever men may pretend for railing against, or oppoling of them, *2 Pet. 2. 10, 11, 12. Jude 8. 9, 10. Añ: 23. 5. Rom: 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*

24. That all ought to avoid the company of *erronrous persons*; as much as they can; especially such persons as hold any *dangerous Tenents*; and make it their businessse to vent them unto others, *Rom. 16. 17. 1 Tim. 6. 3.*

25. That they *walk humbly*, and *seriously* before their fellow Members; and before all men, as much as in them lyeth, *1am. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Añ. 20. 19. Fph. 4. 29, 30. Eph. 5. 4.*

26. That all endeavour to preserve the *purity of the Church*; and not by any means to endeavour either privately or publiquely, the admission of any unworthy person; although their nearest relation, *1 Tym. 5. 26. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 1 Cor. 6. 15 - 19. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17.*

27. That if any Member of the said Church, shall heere or know of any *Scandall*, or *ill report* of a person desiring admission into the Church; that then the said Member, enquire into the truth of it; and in case the said person be found guilty; the said Member should informe the *Pastor* of it; and the person should be suspended untill he hath repented, and declared his repentance to the Church, *1 Cor. 5. 2 Cor. 2.*

28. That in case any member of the said Church, shall be cast out of the Church for *Scandall*; and the said person shall repent afterward: and manifest so much to the satisfaction of the Church: and shall desire to be admitted againe into the Church; he ought to be received againe into Communion, with all love and tenderneesse, *2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. 1 Cor. 5.*

29. That all such as *sin openly*, should be *openly*, speedily, and severely reprov'd, and proceeded against according unto the word of Christ, *1 Tym. 5. 20, 25. 1 Cor. 5. Math: 18. 15, 16.*

30. That as the Church increases, need requires, and persons are found fit: other *Officers* be chosen by the *Pastor*, and *all the members of the Church*

Church then present when any Officer is to be chosen; *Act. 6. 3, 3, 4. 1 Cor. 12. 28.*

31. That all the members ought to be diligent in some honest calling; that so they may be usefull in their generations: and not chargeable to others: and that they may stoppe the mouths of their Adversaries; in case the said members shall be able *Eph. 4. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 10. 2 Thess. 3. 6. 10. 16.*

32. That all in a speciall manner do discharge the duties that they owe unto their Relations; which God hath commanded [to be carefully performed by all both *superiours, and inferiours, as husbands to their wives, Eph. 5. 25. Wives to their Husbands, Eph. 5. 33. Parents to Children Eph. 6. 4. Children to Parents, Eph. 6. 1, 2. Magistrates to the People, Rom. 13. 4. People to their Magistrates, Rom. 13. 4. Masters to their Servants, Col. 4. 1. Servants to their Masters, Eph. 6. 5.*

33. That all should really, and heartily intend, what they shall at any time professe to each other, or any that are without, whether *Saints or Sinners*: as expressions of their Love to them; by their words to take heed that their *hears, and tongues* go together, without all dissimulation, or the worlds complements *Rom. 12. 9. Coll. 3. 23. 1 Pet. 1. 23. Eph. 6. 5. Rom. 9. 2. 2 Cor. 5. 12.*

34. That all the members be carefull to avoyd as much as they can the Company of wicked men especially in any thing that is not of good report, or may be an offence unto any godly person *2 Chron. 18. 1, 3. 1 Cor. 5. 17. Psal. 110. 7.*

35. That all endeavour to hold forth the power and life of Godlinesse before others to manifest the Spirituality of their profession; to take heed and beware of a *formall, dead, saplesse profession*; which may pre-  
dicke the mindes of men against the waies of God, *Phill. chap. 1. v. 27. 1 Pet. 3. 1.*

26. That no member withdraw Communion from the said Church, untill the said member hath given convincing reasons for his, or her withdrawing; why he cannot hold communion with the said Church, *Heb. 10. 24, 25. Heb. 3, 13*

37 That if at any time any member or members of other true Churches that walke in Gospell order shall be recommended to the said church by the Pastor or other *Officers* of the said Churches, and the said persons so recommended shall desire to partake of all Gods Ordinances with the Church that then the said Church ought to admit them into Communion provided they be not *scandalous* or *ignorant*, Rom: 16. 1.

38 That if any member shall desire a dismission from the said Church: to *joyn with another Church of Christ walking in Gospell order*: and it shall upon tryall appeare to be for the advantage of his soule: or the conveniency of its habitation, as being nearer that Church that he is to be a member of: that then the said person ought to have a free dismission.

39 That every member endeavour to avoid bitterness of *Spirit*, or *bitter railing words*, towards such persons as doe not walke in the same way, and order with them waiting for, and endeavouring by all good means, *Loving* and *winning deportments*, and *arguments*, to convince them of their errors; provided they be holy serious persons in appearance at least, Eph: chap: 4. v. 31. 2 Tim. 2. 25. Phil. 3. 15.

40 That every member in his place and capacity doe endeavour to promote the interest of Christ in the world: by praying or by any other lawfull meanes Math: 6. 10.

41 That all should be very sparing in judging such persons as doe differ from them (or the way wherein the said Church walkes) to be no true Saints knowing that they stand or fall to their own master and that they must give an account of themselves to God: provided they are otherwise *sober*, *Spirituall* and *humble* men Rom: 14. 10. Math: 7. 1.

42 That every particular member should seek the *weal* and *happinesse* of his *fellow member* as his own: all should look at one anothers wealth: Phil. 2. 4, 5, 6. 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 10. 24.

43. That every member should patiently submit unto and receive with thankfullnesse all *Reproofs*, *Instructions*, *Councell*, *Admonition*, or *exhortations*



ations from any member of the said Church : *Heb. 13. 17. Coll. 3. 16. Tit. 3. 10.*

¶ 44. That all endeavour to improve all their *priviledges* for the Glory of God: and to performe every duty to God with the more *Strength, wisdom* and *comfort*: and also for the Comfort and edification of each other : *Eph. 1. 12. 1 Cor. 10. 31. 1 Cor. 14. 31.*

45. That all *Children* that shall be baptized in the Church are to be accounted *members of the same Church*; untill they shall justly deprive themselves by scandal or otherwise; for of such is the Kingdome of God *Mark. 10. 14 15, 16.*

46. That so long as the said *Children* shall continue *members of the said Church*, the Church ought to take care of them as *fellow members*; to pray for them and to further by all good meanes their eternall Salvation in an especiall manner *Gal. 6. 10.*

47. That *Rich, and Poore* walke together as *fellow members* of Christ; as *brethren and sisters*, without partiality, and having respect to some persons because they are rich; or disrespecting others because they are poor, *Jam. 2. 1, 6.*

48. That all should greatly humble themselves and mourn before the Lord for their upholding of corruption and complying with the abominable practices of men for the worship of God; and so have thereby *prophaned the Lords holy Ordinances*, and exposed them to contempt; and caused many to desert and cast them off as vaine things, because they saw no distinction made between the precious and the vile; but *doggs and children* eate together as *fellow heires of Heaven*; and God being thereby greatly dishonoured was pleased to withdraw his presence from them; in so much that many gracious hearts have said that they never meet with any soule comforting or soule quickning presence of God in receiving the *Lords supper* with a *mixt multitude*; but as soone as they came out from among them their herats were filled with his presence. *Ezechiel 22. 26. Ezechiel 44. 5, 10. Jerem. 15. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 17.*

49. That all endeavour to performe all their *lawfull promises* that they

they shall at any time make to *Believers* or *unbelievers*; and so to do to, and deale wih others, as they would have others do to them, or deale with them: *Psal.* 15. 4. *Matth.* 7. 12.

50. That all labour and endeavour to prevent *sin* in *themselves*, and in *others*: to keep each other from the *commitment* of *sin*: to endeavour the destruction of each others *Lusts*: and to study wherein they may be furtherers of one anothers *joy*: and when they have found out their duty: accordingly to practise it, *Heb.* 3. 12, 13. *Heb.* 10. 24, 25, 26. *Phil.* 4. 3.

## FINIS.

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**R** Eader I entreat thee to mend these few Erratas, pag. 4. lin: 24. read *since*. l. 26. r. *for*. l. 37. r. *breaking*, p. 7. l. 25. r. *the*, l. 39. r. *thy*, pag. 9. l. r. *insensibly*, p. 18. l. 16. r. *with hearts that*, p. 23. l. 19. r. *he should give*, p. 24. l. r. *for it they*, p. 27. l. 2. leave out *to*, l. 19. r. *you*, p. 32. l. 20. *this*. l. 24. r. *the*



